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Communications concerning the status of women

Non-confidential list of communications concerning the status of women

Note by the Secretary-General

Contents

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	Introduction	1	2
II.	Summary of non-confidential communications concerning the status of women	2–3	2
	Communications concerning the status of women received by the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat		2

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I. Introduction

1. In accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 76 (V) of 5 August 1947, as amended by Council resolution 304 I (XI) of 14 and 17 July 1950, and Council resolution 1983/27 of May 1983, the present report summarizes the communications received by the Division for the Advancement of Women during the period 1 January 1998 to 30 December 1998 dealing with principles relating to the promotion of women's rights in the political, economic, civil, social and educational fields. No communications were received on a non-confidential basis from other units of the United Nations Secretariat (including the regional commissions), other United Nations bodies or the specialized agencies.

II. Summary of non-confidential communications concerning the status of women

Communications concerning the status of women received by the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat

2. Fifty undated identical communications were received in the name of the Women of the World, bearing signatures from the Netherlands and the United States of America, declaring that they have observed with increasing horror, in one country after another, countless tragedies and catastrophes resulting from senseless wars and that, although most peace and human rights movements are made up mainly of women, women have very little influence or power to decide about or to prevent wars. They stated that women and children are largely the innocent victims of wars. They further stated that they would no longer tolerate war and its resulting disasters. An appeal was made to the United Nations to call together the leaders of all nations to discover, through consultation, the means of creating a lasting peace. Assurances were given to offer immediate and full support to any established agreements for peace, safeguarded by international laws and by the willingness of all Governments to abide by them.

3. An undated communication bearing 10 signatures from the United States of America was received, expressing concern about the levels of violence witnessed during this century, and that women and children are the primary victims of war and poverty, and demanding that annually, for the next five years, at least 5 per cent of national military expenditures be redirected to health, education and employment programmes, releasing $1.5 billion a day worldwide for programmes to improve living standards. It also called for war, like slavery, colonialism and apartheid, to be delegitimized as an acceptable form of social behaviour, and for Governments and civil society together to develop new institutions that do not resort to violence for the settlement of disputes. The signatories commit themselves to ensuring that their demands to promote international peace and security are met through legislation and action, inaugurating a new century that rejects warfare and promotes well-being, justice and human rights.